

What is claimed is:

1           1. A method for automated provisioning of computer networks comprising  
2 a plurality of customer accounts, wherein the customer accounts relate to specific  
3 customer hardware devices contained on the network, and specific customer  
4 software applications deployed by way of the computer network, comprising the  
5 steps of:

6           receiving at least one command to be executed on a network device related  
7 to a specific customer account;

8           reading parameters from a network database related to the at least one  
9 command;

10          determining whether the at least one command can be properly executed  
11 based upon the parameters read; and

12          executing the at least one command only if it is determined that the at least  
13 one command can be properly executed.

14          2. The method of claim 1, wherein the command is executed by a network  
15 agent.

16          3. The method of claim 2, wherein the agent has the highest access  
17 available on the network device.

18          4. The method of claim 2, wherein the agent provides information needed  
19 from the network database for comparison with parameters read therefrom.

20          5. The method of claim 4, wherein the determination that a command can  
21 be properly executed is only made if the information needed from the network  
22 database matches the parameters read therefrom.

23          6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

1 receiving a message that at least one command is to be executed from a  
2 secure provisioning network; and  
3 verifying the validity of the message by requesting verification from the  
4 secure provisioning network.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the separate verifying is accomplished  
2 by way of a communication gateway of the provisioning network.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining is based upon  
2 reading software configuration requirements.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the software configuration  
2 requirement indicate that the at least one command is suitable for all customers.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the software configuration  
2 requirements indicate that the at least one command is a customer specific  
3 command.

1 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of determining comprises  
2 determining whether the customer to which the software configuration requirement  
3 is specific is the same customer to which the network device is related.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of executing comprises  
2 installing one or more software packages.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of determining whether the  
2 one or more software packages relates to a specific customer.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the one or more software packages  
2 do not relate to a specific customer, and the at least one command can be properly  
3 executed on network devices related to any customer.

1 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the one or more software packages  
2 relate to a specific customer.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the one or more software packages  
2 that relate to a specific customer are installed by way of the step of executing only  
3 if it is determined in the step of determining that the network device upon which  
4 the one or more software packages are to be installed is associated with the  
5 customer to which the one or more software packages relate.

1 17. The method of claim 15, wherein each customer is assigned to an  
2 individual virtual local area network (VLAN).

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the one or more software package is  
2 installed only if the network device resides on the VLAN of the customer to which  
3 the one or more software packages relate.